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WEEKEND WINNERS

POTTERY WITH A PURPOSE

Lectures, demonstrations, tours, food and 28 potters displaying and selling their handiwork mark the 16th annual Pottery Festival sponsored by Stahl's Pottery Preservation Society, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. today, 6826 Corning Road, Zionsville. $3; free, under 18, benefits restoration and preservation of the site. 610-965-5019.

RELIGIOUS STORY, NEW PERSPECTIVE

Muhlenberg Summer Theatre presents a modern take on the story of Jacob, the colored cloak he presents to his favorite son, Joseph, and the jealous reaction by the other siblings in "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat," 8 p.m. today and 2 p.m. Sunday, Trexler Pavilion, Muhlenberg College, 24th and Chew streets, Allentown. $12-$25. 484-664-3333.

GOOD GRIEF, DON'T MISS IT

Charlie Brown, Snoopy, Linus, Lucy and the entire gang are there; it's the "Peanuts" movie marathon, held in conjunction with the current exhibition "Speak Softly and Carry a Beagle," 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. today, Zoellner Arts Center, 420 E. Packer Ave., Bethlehem. 610-758-2787.

BLUES BLAST

Blues singers and musicians — enough to fill a concert hall — are showcased in a release party for Bummer Tent Records' new CD, "Blues Volume 2," 7 p.m. Sunday, Roxy Theater, 2004 Main St., Northampton. 610-433-4436.

ART, MUSIC

A canopy of trees shields original artworks and the Marine Band performs in the Victorian bandshell (2 p.m.) during Art in the Park, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. today, West Park, 16th and Linden streets, Allentown. 610-434-0657.

MORE THAN MULES

Kathy Odorizzi leads kids on a free walk that teaches them about life on the canal in "Mules, Tools and Towpaths," 1:30 p.m. Sunday, Hugh Moore Historical Park, Easton. 610-559-6613.

WOOD'NT MISS IT

Carving with chainsaws takes on an international flavor as chainsaw artists vie for more than $6,000 in prize money, 7 p.m. today, Schnecksville Community Fair, Route 309, Schnecksville. Free with fair admission ($8). 610-799-9467.

Nervy author Lisa Carver will open her 'Diaries' with skits and music

By Len Righi
Of The Morning Call

When Lisa Carver stages a reading in Bethlehem on Sunday, it won't be at the venerable Moravian Book Shop, but in the scruffier confines of Our Beerbelly's barroom.

Nothing against the oldest bookshop in the world, you see. It's just that Carver's reading actually will be a series of skits based on entries in her famous "Lisa Diaries" for Nerve.com, a widely read Web forum devoted to erotica.

Several indie-pop musicians traveling with Carver also will perform songs based on the unsparingly candid, taboo-breaking and darkly humorous accounts of her sometimes debauched sex life, which, along with her Rollerderby fanzine and the performance troupe Suckdog, made her an underground sensation in the 1990s.

This tour to draw attention to the publication of "The Lisa Diaries: four years in the sex life of Lisa Carver and company" will include 16 performers, as well as some of the adventurous souls attending the free readings in Boston, Bethlehem, New York City and Providence, R.I.

"Instead of me reading from my book, people will perform skits based on diary entries," Carver explains wryly over the telephone from her home in Dover, N.H. "They will play some of the characters and I will narrate. It will be like Shakespeare, but with no pants on."

Making "a wild guess," Carver said there likely would be seven skits. "Some will be planned in advance; others will be planned five minutes in advance," she says. One will be called 'Up a Bewigged Gentleman's Dress.' Another will be 'Her,' which is about a stripper ...

"I'll probably play the googly-eyed lech from the porno store, so I can harass the young ladies."

Carver realizes some people might be reluctant to join in, but to help quiet performance anxiety, she promises, "There will be a lot of fake beards, so if a girl wants to play a guy, or if someone doesn't want to be recognized, they can still participate."

The 34-year-old Carver will be coming to Bethlehem — by far the smallest city on the tour — thanks to the efforts of longtime admirer Bernie Boscoe, who first began reading Carver as a teenager.

"I've known Lisa from her Rollerderby days," says the 31-year-old Boscoe, who was born in Lansdale, grew up in Tatamy and graduated from Nazareth High School and the Pratt Institute. "The magic of the accounts she writes is that they always were so funny. ... Lisa was always deconstructing things, out there on her own.

"In one of her articles she wrote about Kmart and how cool it was to shop there. Here was this punk 'zine queen saying these gaudy clothes were cool!"

Boscoe, a painter and Web site developer for Northampton Community College, finally began an e-mail correspondence with Carver in the late 1990s. "The first e-mail was 'Eight points of why we're similar,' " says Boscoe. "Lisa agreed with them, and she became a confidante and mentor."

One similarity was that both Boscoe and Carver were single mothers (in 1999, Carver married Boston musician Dave Goodkasian, whose band, The Texas Governor, will play in Bethlehem). And when Carver discovered she was pregnant again in 2002, Boscoe wrote a book about her pregnancy so Carver could look for parallels in her experiences. (Carver's daughter, Mercedes, just turned 1 last Sunday. She also has a son, Wolfgang, who is 8.)

Boscoe also attended one of Carver's parties in Dover. "So I got written about for a couple of installments," she says proudly.

Carver says she was impressed that Boscoe would make such a long drive, adding that she unintentionally upset her friend by writing that "she kissed like an antelope."

Before Carver knew who Boscoe was, Carver recalls that Boscoe sent her a painting that made her anxious. "I assumed it was of me and Dave naked in an attic," says Carver, "and the figure that looked like me had real long arms. I thought, 'How does she know about my extra long arms? Is she stalking me?' I found out later that she [paints] everybody out of proportion. I really liked that painting."

When the e-mails began, says Carver, "I thought it was a guy. When she came into my chat room, I thought it was cute that she liked math so much, especially calculus."

Carver expects Boscoe to perform at Our Beerbelly's. "I believe Bernie has written a drunken letter to me, which she will read."

Carver, who grew up on welfare, with her mother in and out of hospitals, says the impetus to live her life publicly and often recklessly came from her dad.

"I adored my dad. I was 13 and was visiting him in California, where he was in and out of jail," she says. "He was a major drug dealer and imported and exported guns illegally. He called me wishy-washy. That was the worst thing you could be in his estimation. I thought I would die; it was like someone had taken a knife to my gut."

In her life Carver worked as a teen prostitute for six weeks; married and quickly divorced a French performance artist at 19, and attempted suicide several times.

But she is in a different place now. On Dec. 30, 2001, she made the final entry in the Web diary she began on Feb. 14, 1999. (The book begins Feb. 14, 1998.)

"The last year of the diaries I was really thinking about my dad a lot and why all my relationships with men fall apart," she says. "That was one reason why I stopped, because it was getting too gloomy."

The other reason was that Web diaries became commonplace. "It was exciting when no one else was doing it," says Carver. "It was scandalous using real names and locations."

At the moment, Carver is working on two novels. "One is about the post-punk movement, the 'no-wave' explosion," she says. "The other is about when my mom was dying and my son was sick and I was all alone on welfare and had a carpenter boyfriend who was a sadist.

"But he was a kind sadist," she adds tenderly. "It's really a happy story."

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ESSAYS from Rollerderby, Carver's ground-breaking fanzine, were compiled into a book.

THE DETAILS

THE LISA DIARIES TOUR with Lisa Carver, The Texas Governor, The Gazetteers, The Sisterhood of Convoluted Thinkers, Clown, Jami Attenberg, Bernie Boscoe, Frank Boscoe and Misty Martinez

- When: noon Sunday
- Where: Our Beerbelly's, 21 E. Elizabeth Ave., Bethlehem
- Admission: free
- Info: 610-730-8560

TABOO-BREAKING is a trademark of author Lisa Carver, who holds her 1-year-old daughter.

Contributed photo

Latin-pop singer communicates to the world with pride

By Tim Blangger
Of The Morning Call

Jade Esteban Estrada doesn't need a guidebook when he performs at lesbian and gay Pride festivals. By his own count, he has appeared in 125 such events in the last three years alone, including several outside the United States.

But when he brings his high-energy Latin pop program to Allentown at noon Sunday to perform at the 10th annual Pride of Lehigh Valley 2003 Festival, he will do essentially the same show he would before other types of audiences.

Whether he is performing in English for 15,000 lesbians in Jacksonville, Fla., or in Spanish for Univision's "Sábado Gigante," the most watched Spanish-language program in North America, his show remains mostly the same. "At the end of the day, people just love music," says Estrada, 29.

Although his performance at the Allentown Pride Festival will involve singing and dancing, Estrada also has directed plays and appeared in one-man stage shows.

He has toured the world extensively, both as a singer-dancer and an actor, having performed in England, Germany and Japan for extended periods, so much so that he considers German, not Spanish, his second language. He also speaks Japanese, a benefit of having spent a year in that country, as well as French.

"At one point, I wanted to be a linguist," says Estrada in perfect, rapid-fire New York English. "I just love communications."

Estrada may be best known for his debut recording, "Angel," released on his own record label, Vicarious Records. The eight-song collection, in both English and Spanish, incorporates several musical styles, including salsa, merengue, calypso and reggae. Snippets of his Latin pop songs have appeared on the police drama, "The Shield."

One tune from "Angel," the upbeat, English version of "Bella Morena," also appears on "Being Out Rocks" (Centaur), a fund-raiser for a human rights project that also includes songs by Sarah McLachlan, k.d. lang and Bob Mould, among others.

Estrada, who is openly gay, "came out" in 1998.

Contributed photo

PRIDE IN WHO HE IS drives singer Jade Esteban Estrada.

THE DETAILS

JADE ESTEBAN ESTRADA, SINGER AND DANCER

- When: Noon Sunday, performing as part of the 10th annual Pride of the Lehigh Valley 2003 Festival, which will continue until 6 p.m.
- Where: Cedar Creek Park, Ott and Hamilton streets, Allentown
- Admission: free

"I was doing so many [Pride festivals] that it was hard to stay in the closet," Estrada says. "There is such a" — and here his usually upbeat voice falters slightly as he searches for the right word — "pride in being true to yourself."

His sexual orientation has never been a problem, Estrada says, even when he performs in Spanish before Latino audiences, whom, he says, tend to be a conservative group oriented to church and family.

"It's a funny thing, but in all but a few exceptions, the Latino press never writes about my personal life," Estrada says. "Latin people are very protective of one another and very protective of their performers and their artists."

Estrada, who enjoys telling stories, illustrates his point: Recently he was performing before a predominantly Spanish-speaking audience in San Diego as part of a festival organized by actor Edward James Olmos.

"I was wearing these platform boots, like the rock band Kiss. And usually I work with a cordless microphone, but in this case I had a corded mic. I swore around a lot on stage, and I like to interact with the audience, so usually corded mikes are death for me. But it was OK. I said I would use it.

"Anyway, I did this spin in the boots and fell. I'm always the first to laugh at myself — you can't take yourself too seriously — but I noticed that, to a person, everyone in the audience had chosen not to acknowledge that I fell. It was as if they were saying, 'OK, get back on your feet. We won't notice.' "

Born in San Antonio, Estrada is a son of a U.S. military officer father and a playwright mother. His first name, Jade, was his mother's idea, Estrada says. "She was a flower child," he says with a laugh.

His father wanted Jade to join the Army and become an officer, and Estrada believes he would have been a good one, had he chosen that path.

But since he was a young man, Estrada had a love for performing. As a teen, Estrada won a scholarship to New York's American Musical and Dramatic Academy, and never looked back. When he is not touring, he splits his time between homes in New York City and Los Angeles.

After his Allentown show, Estrada will travel back to New York, where he is scheduled to perform in the kickoff event of a weeklong New York City Pride Rally and StagePest. Estrada then travels to Switzerland, before returning again to New York, where he will help close the city's Pride festival.

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